



Stephen C. Barlow
Senior Vice President
Director of Human Resources

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To Members of the Labor Committee:

I am the Human Resources Director of Liberty Bank, a mutual savings bank with 580 employees located in Middletown. I am writing to voice my opposition to Senate Bill 63 which would mandate Connecticut employers to provide paid sick leave at a minimum of one hour for every 40 hours worked.

I oppose passage of this bill for several reasons. Connecticut's economy continues to struggle, and it is increasingly difficult for many employers to conduct business in the state. Increasing the cost of employee benefits would be a significant hardship for many companies, particularly smaller ones. Bill 63 would mandate paid sick leave for Connecticut employers of 50 or more, and understanding is that advocates of the bill have expressed intent to expand this mandate to smaller businesses if it becomes law. This would be a significant financial burden which may force employers to relocate to a less expensive state, prevent certain employers from moving into the state, or forcing some employers to go out of business. Being a state chartered bank we rely on making loans to local businesses to make a profit. The fewer businesses we have to lend to the less opportunity we have to continue to grow and remain a viable organization.

Employers continue to be faced with increasing costs of offering benefits to their employees as well as the ever-growing impact of regulations and laws governing benefits. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), for example, is a benefit which provides paid and/or unpaid time off to employees both for themselves as well as family members for certain qualifying events. Besides the federal FMLA requirement, our state has already added its own state requirements which have proven even more costly for Connecticut employers. Besides the obvious cost of providing both State and Federal FMLA benefits, the acts also require a great deal of attention to administer them. Senate Bill 63 would exacerbate not only the cost of doing business in Connecticut but also increase the compliance burden as well.

Passage of a bill mandating paid sick leave may very well cause employers to review their current benefit offerings and plan design. At Liberty we offer a very attractive array of benefits which includes paid time off. If bills are passed with similar intent as Bill 63, it may result changes to our benefits package with respect to time off.

I request that you take into consideration my written testimony with respect to Senate Bill 63.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Barlow
Director of Human Resources